

Assembly Bill No. 917

Passed the Assembly August 30, 2013

Chief Clerk of the Assembly

Passed the Senate August 26, 2013

Secretary of the Senate

This bill was received by the Governor this _____ day
of _____, 2013, at _____ o'clock ____M.

Private Secretary of the Governor

CHAPTER _____

An act to amend Section 47605 of the Education Code, relating to charter schools.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 917, Bradford. Charter schools: authorization: petition: signatures.

(1) The Charter Schools Act of 1992 allows one or more persons seeking to establish a charter school within a school district to circulate a petition to that effect. The act allows a charter petition to be submitted to the governing board of a school district for review after the petition is signed by a number of parents or legal guardians of pupils that is equivalent to at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the number of pupils that the charter school estimates will enroll in the charter school for its first year of operation or is signed by a number of teachers that is equivalent to at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the number of teachers that the charter school estimates will be employed at the charter school during its first year of operation.

This bill, with respect to charter petitions signed by teachers, would require instead that the petition be signed by a number of nonsupervisory certificated staff and classified employees that combined is equivalent to at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total number of nonsupervisory certificated staff and classified employees that the charter school estimates will be employed at the school during its first year of operation.

(2) The act allows a petition that proposes to convert an existing public school to a charter school that would not be eligible for a loan, as specified, to be circulated by one or more persons seeking to establish the charter school. The act allows such a petition to be submitted to the governing board of a school district for review after the petition is signed by not less than 50% of the permanent status teachers currently employed at the public school to be converted.

This bill, instead, would require the petition to be signed by a number of permanent status nonsupervisory certificated staff and permanent classified employees that combined is equivalent to at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total number of permanent status nonsupervisory

certificated staff and permanent classified employees currently employed at the public school to be converted to a charter school.

(3) The bill also would make conforming changes and other nonsubstantive changes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 47605 of the Education Code is amended to read:

47605. (a) (1) Except as set forth in paragraph (2), a petition for the establishment of a charter school within a school district may be circulated by one or more persons seeking to establish the charter school. A petition for the establishment of a charter school shall identify a single charter school that will operate within the geographic boundaries of that school district. A charter school may propose to operate at multiple sites within the school district, as long as each location is identified in the charter school petition. The petition may be submitted to the governing board of the school district for review after either of the following conditions is met:

(A) The petition is signed by a number of parents or legal guardians of pupils that is equivalent to at least one-half of the number of pupils that the charter school estimates will enroll in the school for its first year of operation.

(B) The petition is signed by a number of nonsupervisory certificated staff and classified employees that combined is equivalent to at least one-half of the total number of nonsupervisory certificated staff and classified employees that the charter school estimates will be employed at the school during its first year of operation.

(2) A petition that proposes to convert an existing public school to a charter school that would not be eligible for a loan pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 41365 may be circulated by one or more persons seeking to establish the charter school. The petition may be submitted to the governing board of the school district for review after the petition is signed by a number of permanent status nonsupervisory certificated staff and permanent classified employees that combined is equivalent to at least one-half of the total number of permanent status nonsupervisory certificated staff and permanent classified employees currently employed at the public school to be converted to a charter school.

(3) (A) A petition shall include a prominent statement that a signature on the petition has one of the following meanings:

(i) In the case of a parent's or legal guardian's signature, that the parent or legal guardian is meaningfully interested in having his or her child or ward attend the charter school.

(ii) In the case of a teacher's signature, that the teacher is meaningfully interested in teaching at the charter school.

(iii) In the case of a classified employee's signature, that the classified employee is meaningfully interested in working at the charter school.

(B) The proposed charter shall be attached to the petition.

(4) After receiving approval of its petition, a charter school that proposes to establish operations at one or more additional sites shall request a material revision to its charter, and shall notify the authority that granted its charter of those additional locations. The authority that granted its charter shall consider whether to approve those additional locations at an open, public meeting. If the additional locations are approved, they shall be a material revision to the charter school's charter.

(5) A charter school that is unable to locate within the jurisdiction of the chartering school district may establish one site outside the boundaries of the school district, but within the county in which that school district is located, if the school district within the jurisdiction of which the charter school proposes to operate is notified in advance of the charter petition approval, the county superintendent of schools and the Superintendent are notified of the location of the charter school before it commences operations, and either of the following circumstances exists:

(A) The school has attempted to locate a single site or facility to house the entire program, but a site or facility is unavailable in the area in which the school chooses to locate.

(B) The site is needed for temporary use during a construction or expansion project.

(6) Commencing January 1, 2003, a petition to establish a charter school shall not be approved to serve pupils in a grade level that is not served by the school district of the governing board considering the petition, unless the petition proposes to serve pupils in all of the grade levels served by that school district.

(b) No later than 30 days after receiving a petition, in accordance with subdivision (a), the governing board of the school district

shall hold a public hearing on the provisions of the charter, at which time the governing board of the school district shall consider the level of support for the petition by teachers employed by the district, other employees of the district, and parents. Following review of the petition and the public hearing, the governing board of the school district shall either grant or deny the charter within 60 days of receipt of the petition, provided, however, that the date may be extended by an additional 30 days if both parties agree to the extension. In reviewing petitions for the establishment of charter schools pursuant to this section, the chartering authority shall be guided by the intent of the Legislature that charter schools are and should become an integral part of the California educational system and that the establishment of charter schools should be encouraged. The governing board of the school district shall grant a charter for the operation of a school under this part if it is satisfied that granting the charter is consistent with sound educational practice. The governing board of the school district shall not deny a petition for the establishment of a charter school unless it makes written factual findings, specific to the particular petition, setting forth specific facts to support one or more of the following findings:

(1) The charter school presents an unsound educational program for the pupils to be enrolled in the charter school.

(2) The petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition.

(3) The petition does not contain the number of signatures required by subdivision (a).

(4) The petition does not contain an affirmation of each of the conditions described in subdivision (d).

(5) The petition does not contain reasonably comprehensive descriptions of all of the following:

(A) (i) A description of the educational program of the school, designed, among other things, to identify those whom the school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21st century, and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in that program shall include the objective of enabling pupils to become self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners.

(ii) A description, for the charter school, of annual goals, for all pupils and for each subgroup of pupils identified pursuant to Section 52052, to be achieved in the state priorities, as described

in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school, and specific annual actions to achieve those goals. A charter petition may identify additional school priorities, the goals for the school priorities, and the specific annual actions to achieve those goals.

(iii) If the proposed school will serve high school pupils, a description of the manner in which the charter school will inform parents about the transferability of courses to other public high schools and the eligibility of courses to meet college entrance requirements. Courses offered by the charter school that are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges may be considered transferable and courses approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the “A” to “G” admissions criteria may be considered to meet college entrance requirements.

(B) The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the charter school. “Pupil outcomes,” for purposes of this part, means the extent to which all pupils of the school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the school’s educational program. Pupil outcomes shall include outcomes that address increases in pupil academic achievement both schoolwide and for all groups of pupils served by the charter school, as that term is defined in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 47607. The pupil outcomes shall align with the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school.

(C) The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is to be measured. To the extent practicable, the method for measuring pupil outcomes for state priorities shall be consistent with the way information is reported on a school accountability report card.

(D) The governance structure of the school, including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement.

(E) The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the school.

(F) The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall include

the requirement that each employee of the school furnish the school with a criminal record summary as described in Section 44237.

(G) The means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted.

(H) Admission requirements, if applicable.

(I) The manner in which annual, independent financial audits shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted accounting principles, and the manner in which audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the chartering authority.

(J) The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled.

(K) The manner by which staff members of the charter schools will be covered by the State Teachers' Retirement System, the Public Employees' Retirement System, or federal social security.

(L) The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the school district who choose not to attend charter schools.

(M) A description of the rights of an employee of the school district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the school district after employment at a charter school.

(N) The procedures to be followed by the charter school and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter.

(O) A declaration of whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for purposes of Chapter 10.7 (commencing with Section 3540) of Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code.

(P) A description of the procedures to be used if the charter school closes. The procedures shall ensure a final audit of the school to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of the charter school, including plans for disposing of any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records.

(c) (1) Charter schools shall meet all statewide standards and conduct the pupil assessments required pursuant to Sections 60605 and 60851 and any other statewide standards authorized in statute or pupil assessments applicable to pupils in noncharter public schools.

(2) Charter schools shall, on a regular basis, consult with their parents, legal guardians, and teachers regarding the school's educational programs.

(d) (1) In addition to any other requirement imposed under this part, a charter school shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations, shall not charge tuition, and shall not discriminate against a pupil on the basis of the characteristics listed in Section 220. Except as provided in paragraph (2), admission to a charter school shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the pupil, or of his or her parent or legal guardian, within this state, except that an existing public school converting partially or entirely to a charter school under this part shall adopt and maintain a policy giving admission preference to pupils who reside within the former attendance area of that public school.

(2) (A) A charter school shall admit all pupils who wish to attend the school.

(B) If the number of pupils who wish to attend the charter school exceeds the school's capacity, attendance, except for existing pupils of the charter school, shall be determined by a public random drawing. Preference shall be extended to pupils currently attending the charter school and pupils who reside in the district except as provided for in Section 47614.5. Other preferences may be permitted by the chartering authority on an individual school basis and only if consistent with the law.

(C) In the event of a drawing, the chartering authority shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the growth of the charter school and in no event shall take any action to impede the charter school from expanding enrollment to meet pupil demand.

(3) If a pupil is expelled or leaves the charter school without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the charter school shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil's last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card, and health information. This paragraph applies only to pupils subject to compulsory full-time education pursuant to Section 48200.

(e) The governing board of a school district shall not require an employee of the school district to be employed in a charter school.

(f) The governing board of a school district shall not require a pupil enrolled in the school district to attend a charter school.

(g) The governing board of a school district shall require that the petitioner or petitioners provide information regarding the proposed operation and potential effects of the school, including, but not limited to, the facilities to be used by the school, the manner in which administrative services of the school are to be provided, and potential civil liability effects, if any, upon the school and upon the school district. The description of the facilities to be used by the charter school shall specify where the school intends to locate. The petitioner or petitioners also shall be required to provide financial statements that include a proposed first-year operational budget, including startup costs, and cashflow and financial projections for the first three years of operation.

(h) In reviewing petitions for the establishment of charter schools within the school district, the governing board of the school district shall give preference to petitions that demonstrate the capability to provide comprehensive learning experiences to pupils identified by the petitioner or petitioners as academically low achieving pursuant to the standards established by the department under Section 54032, as it read before July 19, 2006.

(i) Upon the approval of the petition by the governing board of the school district, the petitioner or petitioners shall provide written notice of that approval, including a copy of the petition, to the applicable county superintendent of schools, the department, and the state board.

(j) (1) If the governing board of a school district denies a petition, the petitioner may elect to submit the petition for the establishment of a charter school to the county board of education. The county board of education shall review the petition pursuant to subdivision (b). If the petitioner elects to submit a petition for establishment of a charter school to the county board of education and the county board of education denies the petition, the petitioner may file a petition for establishment of a charter school with the state board, and the state board may approve the petition, in accordance with subdivision (b). A charter school that receives approval of its petition from a county board of education or from the state board on appeal shall be subject to the same requirements concerning geographic location to which it would otherwise be subject if it received approval from the entity to which it originally

submitted its petition. A charter petition that is submitted to either a county board of education or to the state board shall meet all otherwise applicable petition requirements, including the identification of the proposed site or sites where the charter school will operate.

(2) In assuming its role as a chartering agency, the state board shall develop criteria to be used for the review and approval of charter school petitions presented to the state board. The criteria shall address all elements required for charter approval, as identified in subdivision (b), and shall define “reasonably comprehensive” as used in paragraph (5) of subdivision (b) in a way that is consistent with the intent of this part. Upon satisfactory completion of the criteria, the state board shall adopt the criteria on or before June 30, 2001.

(3) A charter school for which a charter is granted by either the county board of education or the state board based on an appeal pursuant to this subdivision shall qualify fully as a charter school for all funding and other purposes of this part.

(4) If either the county board of education or the state board fails to act on a petition within 120 days of receipt, the decision of the governing board of the school district to deny a petition shall be subject to judicial review.

(5) The state board shall adopt regulations implementing this subdivision.

(6) Upon the approval of the petition by the county board of education, the petitioner or petitioners shall provide written notice of that approval, including a copy of the petition, to the department and the state board.

(k) (1) The state board may, by mutual agreement, designate its supervisorial and oversight responsibilities for a charter school approved by the state board to any local educational agency in the county in which the charter school is located or to the governing board of the school district that first denied the petition.

(2) The designated local educational agency shall have all monitoring and supervising authority of a chartering agency, including, but not limited to, powers and duties set forth in Section 47607, except the power of revocation, which shall remain with the state board.

(3) A charter school that is granted its charter through an appeal to the state board and elects to seek renewal of its charter shall,

before expiration of the charter, submit its petition for renewal to the governing board of the school district that initially denied the charter. If the governing board of the school district denies the school's petition for renewal, the school may petition the state board for renewal of its charter.

(l) Teachers in charter schools shall hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold. These documents shall be maintained on file at the charter school and are subject to periodic inspection by the chartering authority. It is the intent of the Legislature that charter schools be given flexibility with regard to noncore, noncollege preparatory courses.

(m) A charter school shall transmit a copy of its annual, independent financial audit report for the preceding fiscal year, as described in subparagraph (I) of paragraph (5) of subdivision (b), to its chartering entity, the Controller, the county superintendent of schools of the county in which the charter school is sited, unless the county board of education of the county in which the charter school is sited is the chartering entity, and the department by December 15 of each year. This subdivision does not apply if the audit of the charter school is encompassed in the audit of the chartering entity pursuant to Section 41020.

Approved _____, 2013

Governor